

This is an interview with Minnie Crouse Rasmussen at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jex Terry, 1925 South 1500 West, Vernal, Utah, on 28 October 1977. This is Diedra Northern of the Golden Age Center, Vernal, Utah.

Diedra Northern (DN): Okay, do you want to tell me about the saloon again?

Minnie Rasmussen: Well, he was an Overholt. They had so much property here and Overholt came over here in the saloon. I know who he bought it from, but, let's see... Anyway, Overholt came over and he lived in the saloon or he ran the saloon. We used to come over here for school. We had a nice house next to the saloon right off Main Street. It was called the Antler Saloon. As time went on, he took care of business here. My father and he agreed that they would be partners. They never had a word and finally, after a while, there was a woman came into the picture and she finally married Overholt. My father took everything in Brown's Park; he [Overholt] took everything in Vernal.

DN: He had a livery stable, too, here in Vernal?

Minnie: Yes, they had a livery stable and had the jacks in it and they bred mares to raise mules, you know. Then the country patronized that, too, you know.

DN: Did you know Matt Warner?

Minnie: Oh, yes.

DN: Were you good friends with Matt?

Minnie: Yes, he worked for my father for years. He was married, and after he had been in jail, in the penitentiary, he decided to become an honest citizen. He brought his wife and came to our home in Vernal. We had another home. We moved up to another place. Henroid is one of the men owned the saloon before them. Matt brought her to Brown's Park and they had a little girl, Hattie. We came over here to school and he was going to stay in Brown's Park. He was on the Parsons' place, you've heard of that maybe. He was there in the cabin where they're making a thing of it.

Matt's wife fell in the cellar. They had a wonderful spring there. They rocked it up and put a roof over it. They used to go down and carry the water up to the house and she fell and bumped her knee, bruised it, and it developed into something, and finally, she was so sick he brought her to my father and he brought her to Vernal. In our house, they amputated her leg. My mother helped the Army doctors. Anyway, her mother finally came. We had to do something, you know.

They moved into a house in Vernal. She got pregnant and the baby came all right. Her leg flared up again and they took her to Salt Lake and took it off and she died then. Rose was a beautiful nice girl. You hear so many stories about how cruel, how ruthless and all he was, but that's all lies, I think. I can't believe it; I didn't hear it at home. Those things never happened,

what they said he was. I don't know where they get these things, but that wasn't true.

She died and then he, well, I have a letter from him. It's in that part of a book. You've seen the one, *The Old West Stayed Young*, I suppose? Well, that letter's in it. You read that, I suppose?

DN: No, I didn't read the letter.

Minnie: Didn't you read the letter? It's back somewhere in it. He wrote me once and wanted to know how we were and how everybody was and all the old different characters. He was going to come out, but that never happened either, come to visit me, and I was a little embarrassed. Wasn't I foolish? When I first came back from school, I was so embarrassed to hear them call it Brown's Hole, those things, but anyway, he didn't come, he died. We knew him well, but we didn't know he was mean when he was doing his thing. I don't know if I could say anymore. I don't know.

DN: Do you remember Speck Williams?

Minnie: Oh, yes.

DN: He worked for your father?

Minnie: He worked in the country, for my father and everyone, you know, round and about. I suppose you read about my father sticking him with a knife. Didn't you hear that?

DN: No.

Minnie: Well, he was a Negro and my father was a Virginian, and you know how that was.

DN: Yes.

Minnie: As the story is, they were drinking. He came, met my father, got in with him and they were talking and having a pretty good time even though he was a Negro. Anyway, they got in an argument and my father was supposed to have stuck him with a knife, which he did, it's the truth, but he didn't die. My mother took care of him, and the Davenports took him, but that happened. The stories are exaggerated in a way. The V.S. and J.S. Hoy manuscript says my father told him the story and I think it's about like what happened, liquor and tempers.

DN: Who were some of the people that you knew when you moved to Vernal?

Minnie: To Vernal, well, I don't know. You knew everyone. This was a poor little country then. I loved it. I went to school here one year. My teachers were Mrs. Holdaway, and her husband was a teacher also, and the McCarrells. They lived across the street from the school. My mother and Mrs. McCarrell had made linen aprons, white aprons. Every morning I went to Mrs. McCarrell's before school and I got a white apron on and took it back at night and the next morning it was ready. Isn't that something? I went to the church school.

One winter there where the church is now, you know, over there, a friend of my mother's had a son and he and I were the only Gentiles [non-Mormons] in the school. We were in the grades; there wasn't high school or higher anyway. I can't just remember the details, but if I had my old book, *The Utah Centennial*, everything is in it, all the characters, the people to remember, names and things like that. But the book is in Arizona, so it doesn't do me much good. We'd like to have it here. So many things have come up that I could prove and dates and things. My father lived with the pioneers over there in the fort they built, in old Ashley town.

DN: What fort was that?

Minnie: Well, it didn't have a name. I don't remember, but old Ashley and the people were afraid of the Indians and they banded together and lived in there and he was in there with them. He'd go out and run races with the Indians and shoot game and take it back, and flour and trade for this and that. It's very commented on. He's given a very nice little write up in the back of it. That was before he was married. I don't know. There's a space in there that I, you know, for the time he settled on the Park livestock. But I've gone over this so many times, I'm a little confused sometimes afterwards, when I think about it. You should have said this or that or you should have brought that in or something, you know. The man who wrote *Flaming Gorge*, have you seen that?

DN: Yes.

Rasmussen: He gave me a tape recorder and all the things that go with it and I already had one at home. I didn't bring it with me. He wanted me to do my life, just not all these particular things, but the things that affected me, as I remembered them. But I haven't ever had time or the opportunity or something or the urge to do it and I'm afraid I'm never going to do it. Oh, it's funny. But just things that I can't remember. I'll be glad to tell you.

DN: Okay, you just tell me anything, any stories you'd like to. Did you know Isom Dart?

Minnie: Oh, yes. I remember sitting on his shoulders trying to find out what become of his ear.

DN: What happened to his ear?

Minnie: Well, he got in a thing with a squaw and the squaw's husband came home. He was a very bad man and he was going to make her come back to him and Isom had made a home for her and the little girl. They were in a fight, the two of them, and she was so mad at him because he wouldn't fight the man. He was a slave once and a slave is always a slave, they were afraid. She reached over and she had a knife and is supposed to have cut it, cut his ear off. She was going to beat him for not standing up for himself and her and cut part of it off.

DN: Is that when he went by the name of Ned?

Minnie: Well, yes, Ned, Ned Huddleston. Yes, the same Isom. Just lately I got some pictures that I inherited from a cousin who lived in Manila and they are mostly family pictures. But some of

them that are not, are interesting.

DN: Did you remember Tom Horn when he came into Brown's Park?

Minnie: Oh, no, I don't know Tom Horn. But I was away at school then. My little brother, who was then eight or nine years old, was herding horses up on Diamond Mountain. They had a camp there and my other brother, too. He was younger and, of course, my father would see them every day or so and one day a man came along and said, "Hello, you have a nice place here." He talked to them and in the end, why, he stayed all night and slept with them. It was Tom Horn and he was on his way up north and that's when he killed Willie Nichols. He slept with him and when Tom Horn was executed my father took Stanley and they went to Rawlins and they saw it.

I never knew Tom Horn. I read his book and you hear everything, but I never even saw him. I read much about him before he ever came into this country. I read a wonderful book once called *The Women of the West* about Custer and all those generals. They were trying to keep the Indians down. He was made an officer or given the job as sheriff or something, some kind of officer. I was interested in that and the follow-up.

DN: Do you remember when Butch Cassidy worked for your dad?

Minnie: I don't know that he ever worked for him. He rode horses for him, but he never was a constant. He never had a job with my dad that I know of. He was here and there and he rode races for him. One race, anyway, that I know about, happened in the lower end of Brown's Park. They raced and he won the race. My father and Aunt Annie and the other women gave a big dinner to celebrate it. They said, "Where's so and so?" Nobody knew. My dad went out and found him in the bunkhouse, alone, you know. They made him come in. He didn't want to, but he finally went in and had dinner with them. When it was over, he left and they danced the rest of the night. He didn't; he was shy then. That was in his very beginning, I guess. They all found out it was Butch and they were tickled, but he didn't have that name then, either.

DN: Did he go by his real name then?

Minnie: I guess, or whatever. No, he went by Cassidy. He went by that name. This Cassidy was an idol of his life when he was a kid.

DN: Joe Haslem talked about Wong Sing, the Chinese. Do you remember him or did you have anything to do with him?

Minnie: Was that in Vernal?

DN: Yes, he had a laundry.

Minnie: Yeah, I know. I wouldn't have recognized the name. I had forgotten it. But we lived in Vernal then, and he had a little store and laundry. I used to go in to buy gum, some kind of white, like wax, or some kind of gum like that. I just loved it.

I was scared to death of him. He was nice to us, but we didn't bother him at all. He lived

right near us. It was on the front street, however, on the main street. The livery stable would be just on Main Street, only just back of our house was this way, see.

They been going to bring Joe Haslem up here. I can't remember what connection, some child was born. I wonder if it was his grandmother or his former parents that came and took care of my mother or my aunt when a child was born in Brown's Park. If I could see him, I might. Artie was saying they would invite him up some evening, but they haven't done it. I'll be going pretty soon.

DN: Going to Arizona?

Minnie: Yes. Say anything that's interesting. If you leave, you know, that's how the girls came to see me. And then all the pictures and the birth certificates. No, not the birth certificates, none of us had a birth certificate, but a marriage license and all interesting things like that, but they have for reference. I still have lots of things that would be interesting for you to see.

DN: Have you? I'd love to see them.

Minnie: Oh, heavens, we can't get a hold of them in Arizona.

DN: Oh, everything's down there, huh?

Minnie: Oh, sure.

DN: Well, if you get them up here, I'd surely be interested in seeing them.

Minnie: Well, maybe. I might not be back this way again, who knows? I cooked and I didn't know how to cook and I never had.

DN: Where did you cook? Just at home?

Minnie: Yes, in a way. Someone else was there, you know, at Linwood. I cooked in boarding houses. Then I homesteaded.

DN: In Linwood?

Minnie: No, it wasn't in Linwood. It was over near Dutch John or that way, you know, Titsworth, or the Gap. We had quite a number of years there at the Gap. I did get married and had a child, that I still have, also grandchildren. They are in Arizona. It was real nice when they had the dedication of the road over the Gap. Were you there?

DN: No, I wasn't out there when they dedicated it.

Minnie: They included me and it was nice. Then all this research and all this old time thing is coming up so heavy. It's something; it's something. Her relatives were here. They were in Brown's Park in the very early days and she's researching all she can. Jarvies came from

Scotland. I knew him every day, but I don't know where he was born or his background. Evidently, he had an education before he came over here. He had a saloon in Rock Springs and started that way. He married well. He married someone from a family from Philadelphia, a beautiful woman, brought her out there on Green River and she died there of TB. He went right on and raised his children for her.

DN: Were there a lot of epidemics?

Minnie: No, I don't think so. We used to have things like lung fever and "cholera morbis."

DN: What are those?

Minnie: Well, lung fever would be what you call pneumonia now. Cholera morbis would be from eating cucumbers with the skins on. You'd have a terrible stomachache. A man, Holdaway, an old-timer from here, died of it, and we always said he died of cholera morbis. It was digestive or whatever. Whatever he died of, I don't know, maybe there wasn't a doctor. I don't know for sure. But anyway, we had measles and smallpox and things like that, you know, sometimes. It was very bad. But then, I was going to say, the flu. That was in the World War, but that was terrible, terrible.

DN: How did the Depression affect you in Brown's Park?

Minnie: Oh, I remember it well. We were always pretty well-to-do, you know. We never suffered for food or clothes to wear or anything. My mother never worked outside. When I was born she had a very bad time, female trouble. She had many miscarriages and that's hard on women. One time my father couldn't pay his life insurance. A man, a friend from Rock Springs, Tim Kenney, who had a store there and was a sheepman and cattleman, in those days he sold a house in Kemmerer and sent my father the money, something like \$30, to pay his life insurance. They were that friendly. My father never asked for it; that was the way it was, that was the way people were. My mother made moccasins. Our shoes wore out and she made moccasins.

DN: How did she make them?

Minnie: With a buckskin and cowhides, just like the Indians did. They were crude, I suppose, not beautiful like the Indians did them, but they covered our feet. We went to town, to Rock Springs, twice a year. You made out your list as big as that paper, what you needed and wanted: flour, sugar, coffee, oatmeal, dried fruits, and some canned stuff like oysters that people loved, my father loved them. And canned strawberries, they weren't red like they are, the heat takes the color out, I guess. My mother always made shortcakes.

We had milk, we had pigs, we had a wonderful garden. Everyone wasn't that well off, I mean in Brown's Park, either. The Bassetts, when they came there, the women helped them a lot with food. My aunt used to save all the buttermilk for them and she would take it over or send it over. When Ann was born, there wasn't any milk for her and they had an Indian squaw that nursed Ann.

DN: Mrs. Bassett died?

Minnie: Yes. Her children were quite upset when she died. She worked hard, rode and worked like a man. I don't ever remember seeing her, though. The brother, Sam, I remember. I went to school with the Bassett boys.

DN: And you remember Josie and Ann quite well?

Minnie: Oh, yes, I have a good, a real good memory of Josie.

DN: Why is that?

Minnie: Oh, well, it was tragic. After a marriage or two, she had another one. They lived on Willow Creek, in Brown's Park. They came up to Linwood. Linwood was a new place. There were old-timers there, Indians, squaw men and ranchers and this man by the name Larsen took up a homestead there and built a beautiful house. Some of his children were born there. Larsen built a dance hall. Dancing was very popular and people used to come for thirty, forty miles to the dances, in a wagon, you know, bedding for the children.

Josie, they came up there to a dance once. I had a homestead and they came by my place. Nobody was there. The house was open like it always was, everybody's doors were. They had lunch there and she went through my things. I say she, because nobody else would've had the things she had. She took a toilet set, a button hook and what else? There was three pieces, a button hook, and they had been made in the penitentiary with onyx handles. Matt Warner had sent them to me when I was little. There was a strip of material that was one of my baby dresses, when I was little, you know. We used to wear long, long dresses and this was beautiful embroidery, not hand done, but embroidery. That little strip of stuff had been saved somehow. I don't know how. My mother's gone by this time, you know. She had that material.

They had rented a cabin. There was a man and his wife and a little child with her, with Josie. They came in an old-fashioned buckboard, little sleighed buckboard, winter thing. It was just one seat, room enough for just two people, you know, and they drove over there and they got this room and there was a saloon across the way, just a little ways. The man's name, his nickname, was Nig Wells [Emerson Wells], and he was with her. Whether he was a legally married husband or not, that's beside the point. He went over to the saloon and got happy.

The dance came on that night and lots and lots of people came and it was a big dance. It was the new hall. It was a hardwood floor and it was an octagon-shaped building, very nice. The walls were lined with burlap, strips of burlap around, you know, all like up so high and then a little more, and some on the ceiling, shades of red and green. It was very colorful. The dance came on and Nig was too far gone to go to the dance, or didn't want to or something. They went, and left him, down to the dance. They had midnight supper in the hotel that I had cooked.

Nig Wells was dead in the morning. She came over and moved into my kitchen or into my house and there was a bedroom right off the kitchen. She had a suitcase in there and I went to make the bed. I don't know where she was.

The snow was very deep between Brown's Park and Vernal. In the winter, we never could get to the courthouse. Daggett was Uintah County then, you know, and Rock Springs, it's Wyoming. It's just a little ways across and they wouldn't have anything to do legally with a case

like that.

Well, I meant to make the bed. The suitcase was laying on the bed and I picked it up by the handle. It wasn't locked and the whole thing fell out. There I saw my stuff, my button hooks and things, the little piece of linen. I knew that in a minute. I didn't know they had stayed the night at my house, my camp. So anyway, there was a bottle of strychnine, a little bottle. It wasn't big enough to kill everybody. So, I picked everything up and put it back in the suitcase, my own stuff, as well. I put it back and made the bed.

That afternoon, they got a justice of the peace. She happened to know whom he had married. No, the son of this man had married. They got talking old time and everything and he just dismissed the case as accident or natural death and it wasn't at all. They take the body that afternoon. They take it and bring it over to, oh, ten, fifteen, twenty miles to a ranch and they stayed all night in a cabin there and they bring it on to Brown's Park and bury it, said they buried it the next day.

People who didn't believe this, not me nor anyone I was connected with, dug up the body and there was no body there at all. She wrote a very scandalous letter about me and it was published in the Rock Springs paper about how I was a fast woman and all that and I was only twenty or something like that, twenty-one or something. That's how much I knew about Josie.

DN: You and Ann got along good, though?

Minnie: Yes, when we met. Yes, we had a very good time the few times we met socially. Once she invited me for Christmas when she was married to Hi Bernard. That was pleasant. Then they were friends with my people, but as far apart... They didn't visit every day or neighbor every day like the people that were around you.

She got away with it. He's buried in Brown's Park. He was a nice kind of a guy. He was in some kind of trouble about changing some brands on some sheep or something. He was in some trouble. But it didn't appear in that at all. She came over and told the men, a whole big long table of men, in the morning, that he was dead, said that he had convulsions. She told a tale, but that's how I knew her well.

I knew her children, I knew her husband, Jim MacKnight, very well. She kicked him out and got away with that, too, got all the property. That was in Butch's days, in those times. That is not when he died. This is years later when he died in my house. She was married and had two children and had broken up with him. But she was a wonderful person. She was a wonderful housekeeper, very nice person and people liked her. She was good and bad. She wasn't a bit like Ann.

DN: What was Ann like?

Minnie: She went to school, you know. She went to St. Mary's in Salt Lake. That was good for her. It was a shock and all that, but she learned from her people and had it in her naturally, I guess, to be ladylike and social. Then she went east to school, to a finishing school, no less, and she shocked them back there, riding. They were teaching riding in this [school] and she showed them! It's real funny, real funny. Then she came back out here and became queen of Brown's Park.

We had an interview once. They moved to Utah after she married a man and they were

divorced and everything was kind of over and Bassetts were broke and they moved to a little town in Utah. I forget just where it was. Anyway, she'd tell interesting stories and was interesting and they asked her for an interview and she gave it. When they found out who she was, they were shocked to death, but she said, "Now, I've done everything that I've been accused of, everything!" She told them. It was cute. I saw quite a lot of her manuscript, once read it, from a friend of mine.

DN: What was in it?

Minnie: Oh, everything, everything. She had a feud with the cattlemen in Brown's Park and they had a big trial in Craig or Rifle. Oh, it was celebrated, it was a huge celebration. They celebrated afterwards. Just over killing a steer, butchering a steer or something like that. All the big outfits, cattlemen, moving into Brown's Park, they didn't like that and I don't blame them. To be really crowded out, that's they way she was. There's lots of wonderful things you could read. I liked her.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Yeah, I did have a great life in my way.

DN: Are you Mrs. Terry?

Minnie: She Mrs. Ylincheta.

Mrs. Ylincheta: I'm Mrs. Terry's mother.

Minnie: Ylincheta.

DN: And you are from Spain?

Minnie: Yes.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Yeah, that's where I come from, yeah. Well, it's nice out there. I tried to iron a while and then I try to take care of the baby so Carolyn can talk to you.

Minnie: Where is Carolyn?

Mrs. Ylincheta: I don't know if she went home or if she's out there with the kids.

Minnie: Jill gave me to understand she would like to be here.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, I told her that I can take care of the babay.

Minnie: Why don't you tell her about the day the man didn't chop any wood for dinner.

DN: Oh, sure, I'd love to hear it.

Mrs. Ylincheta: They didn't chop no wood, so I went outside and I tried to cut a nice big wagon tongue. I don't know if you know what that is.

Minnie: Hardwood.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Anyway, it was hardwood, you know. Well, I couldn't chop it, of course. But if I could've chopped it, the men wouldn't ever know what happened to it! Is that what you wanna tell her?

Minnie: Well, yes, you told her all right.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, you know, they used to be that kind of stories on the farm life and, of course, I came from Spain. But I grew up in this country, right over the mountain, right here in Manila.

Minnie: You had quite a lot of life before Manila, though. Had two babies and a husband.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, I got two babies before I ever come to Manila.

Minnie: I know. That's what I say.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Oh, and I had two babies after.

Minnie: Yes, that's right, and the wars we been through, the wars, you know.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Yes.

Minnie: They made a fine ranch, a fine ranch out of a very old, run down place.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, we didn't make it, Minnie, we bought a little at a time and made a big ranch out of it. Is that what you mean?

Minnie: Partly, yeah.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Yeah, because the land was there. A little at a time we bought it.

Minnie: We've been crocheting place mats and we listen to the radio and we make mistakes and then we unravel and I sit and do nothing, like I am doing now. We've been together since I came here in June and we went to Canada. I went to Canada on a trip with them. What a wonderful trip. Delores and Jex and Mrs. Ylincheta, we had a wonderful time.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, you talk to the lady now that you're awake.

Minnie: I've been awake all this time (laughter) and we been recalling old times and people, the Mormon community, you know, and all this mixture of people and all. It's been fun.

Mrs. Ylincheta: Well, I tell you, when you grow up as old as we are, you been through a lot in this world. Is that what you like to hear? Minnie and I grew up partly together in Manila.

Minnie: We had the store in Manila, goods store.

Mrs. Ylincheta: That's where my husband bought the wagon tongue.

Minnie: Yes, you and he bought it from people in the Ozarks that came out here peddling hard, those kinds of things for wagons. What do you call them, you hook the horses to?

Mrs. Ylincheta: Buggies.

Minnie: Yeah. No, they're kind of hardwood from the Ozarks, you know, from the south. That was real funny about the tongue.

[There are several unrelated comments here. Minnie finally makes this last comment, which is not related to anything which precedes it.]

Minnie: Mrs. Campbell, who knew them very well, she says they argued and Josie never went out and rode for cattle and did those things. She never did those things, but she was a son of a gun behind the scene, you know. She had her influence and she raised her voice. I was with a girl, a woman who married Chick, the other day. [Chick MacKnight, Josie's son] Do you know Rosalie Burton? She was real thrilled. I went to see her. I go to see her and I meet her always when I'm out here. I come nearly every summer, but I haven't been here for two years.

I had some pictures I got. I had a picture of a group of people and I took it to her. She's going to have it enlarged. I had it done once. It takes off very good. She was thrilled to death with it. And this Edith, that married Chick, she's remarried now. He died and they live side by side up there and we play canasta. We're getting to be old people.

